UNITED NATIONS

DP

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/CCF/PRC/1
7 July 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Third regular session 1997
15-19 September 1997, New York
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
UNDP

UNDP: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

FIRST COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (1997-2000)

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION		1	2
I.	DEVELOPMENT SITUATION FROM A SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE	2 - 11	2
II.	RESULTS AND LESSONS OF PAST COOPERATION	12 - 19	5
III.	PROPOSED STRATEGY AND THEMATIC AREAS	20 - 25	7
IV.	MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS	26 - 30	8
Annex.	Resource mobilization target table for the Congo (1997-2001)		10

97-18677 (E)

/...

INTRODUCTION

1. The current country cooperation framework (CCF) for the Congo is the result of a process of consultations between the Government and UNDP, on the one hand, and between the donors, cooperation agencies, Congolese civil society and UNDP, on the other, in which the UNDP advisory note served as the basic document. These consultations were enriched not only by the conclusions of the round table of Congo's development partners which was held from 5 to 7 November 1996 in Geneva and by the consultations on the organization and convening in April and May 1997 of sectoral meetings on agriculture, small- and medium-scale enterprises and industries, transport, health and education, but also by the agreements concluded in 1996 with the World Bank, the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) of the International Monetary Fund and the Paris Club, to which must be added the preliminary conclusions of the dialogue with the Government which was set in motion in 1997 with a view to the approval of a national long-term perspective studies and programmes project (Congo 2025) and the preparation of a national report on sustainable human development.

I. DEVELOPMENT SITUATION FROM A SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

2. An oil producer and ranked until 1995 among middle-income countries, the Congo, notwithstanding its indisputable assets, has been rocked by an acute crisis since 1985. The collapse of oil prices in 1986 marked the start of a long period of economic adjustment, which was translated into a gradual transition to a market economy. From 1991 onwards, this process was accompanied by a political transition to a pluralistic democratic system. Elections were organized from May to August 1992 The early parliamentary elections of 1993, however, gave rise to challenges and led to severe socio-political unrest and an armed conflict which continued until January 1994. With the settlement of the political crisis, it became possible, thanks to a national consensus, to initiate in early 1994 some substantive reforms with a view to remedying financial imbalances and structural problems and sowing the ground for an economic revival to promote sustainable human development, which in the Congo means combating poverty and building management capacity.

A. The state of poverty

3. Poverty is very widespread, with particular consequences for the prospects for survival. This explains why the infant mortality rate is 84 per 1,000 live births and why life expectancy at birth is 51 years, statistics which are more or less similar to the relatively low average for sub-Saharan Africa. It appears from the various reports provided by hospitals that the maternal mortality rate is relatively high (between 650 and 900 deaths per 100,000 live births). Only 42 per cent of the people have access to clean water in the urban areas and this figure drops to 7 per cent in the rural areas. The Government intends to draw up a well-articulated programme to combat poverty that will provide the framework within which all the Congo's development partners can fit their own anti-poverty programmes. The structures that will help to establish

the programme are being discussed with UNDP, which will backstop the coordination efforts of the authorities at that level.

B. The employment situation

4. The key factors that are responsible for the state of poverty include: the lack of jobs and income for sizable fractions of the population; the low level of remuneration for existing jobs; the insufficiency of "indirect income"; lack of education and of access to credit; inequality of opportunity; and inequality before the law. The labour force, which represents 43 per cent of the total population, is divided as follows: 49 per cent in agriculture, 15 per cent in industry and 37 per cent in the tertiary sector (Human Development Report 1996). Six categories of people who are jobless and without adequate income were identified in 1994 by the national integration and reintegration plan: unemployed women who have completed one cycle of school; unemployed school drop-outs; those who were formerly employed by the private sector and by liquidated enterprises; officials who have been made redundant; overnumerous officials in privatizable enterprises in the public sector; and civil service officials who are at risk of being made redundant (1995-1997). The number of jobless is estimated at approximately 400,000 in urban areas, which represents one quarter of the labour force. In addition, there are the socially excluded, namely the physically disabled and the street children, who have been reduced to begging.

5. The solution to the problem of employment in the Congo is bound up with the promotion of the private sector and the development of small- and medium-scale enterprises and industries. The private sector is still at the embryonic stage and has to contend with socio-cultural constraints which are the legacy of a period of thirty years of managed economy. If present trends are to be reversed, it is essential not only for the State to continue its withdrawal from the public sector through the ongoing privatization of public and quasi-public enterprises, but also for it to provide small- and medium-scale enterprises and industries with access to credit, technical and management advice, suitable transport and communication infrastructures and a legal, regulatory, administrative and institutional environment which does not block every private initiative but on the contrary is receptive and supportive.

C. The status of women

6. While women remain excluded from the social and political structures and can only work in the informal sector, they represent 68 per cent of the labour force in rural areas, account for approximately 60 per cent of the agricultural production and perform a significant part of the traditional processing of products. Although they make a major contribution to the economy of the Congo - and in so doing face numerous constraints which limit their productive capacity - Congolese women still are without access to credit. The constraints in question derive from their traditional functions: raising children, performing domestic chores and producing for consumption at home and to generate income. This triple responsibility makes it difficult for women to manage their time and imposes a heavier burden of work. Their difficulties are compounded by problems of health security (a relatively high rate of maternal mortality: 900

deaths per 100,000 live births), of access to basic education and of socio-legal status.

7. The Government's commitment to a policy aimed at ensuring gender equity and gender equality is reflected in particular in its establishment of a ministerial office for the express purpose of mainstreaming women in development. The mandate of the office is to guide and implement the policy for the mainstreaming of Congolese women in the national development process with the following goals in view: alleviating poverty, which represents a heavy burden for women, removing inequalities of access to training and education, terminating gender inequalities with respect to power-sharing, ending violence against women, establishing machinery to promote the advancement of women, ensuring respect for the fundamental rights of women, and mainstreaming a gender perspective in development programmes and plans. As is fully apparent, the concerns of the Government are the same as those of UNDP and include the advancement of women. One of the main goals is to continue and strengthen the cooperation instituted in this sector.

D. The state of the environment

8. The problems which the Congo is experiencing in the area of the environment could grow rapidly worse over the next few years as the forestry and oil sectors evolve. The forestry reserves and biological diversity of the Congo are at risk because of the logging methods used by forestry concessionnaires in the past. Forestry operations expose wildlife refuges and make the wildlife easy prey for poachers. Poaching and the plundering of forests put the natural environment of the indigenous population at risk. The marine and coastal environments are threatened by oil rigs. The urban environment is subjected to the problems posed by erosion, insanitary sewage disposal facilities and the absence of sewage treatment plants. The Congo River, which links together the various subregional parts of a unique ecological system, also deserves special attention.

9. Aware of the risks and stakes involved, in 1994 the Congolese authorities, with the assistance of FAO, adopted a national plan of action for the environment, supplemented by a forestry code and a wildlife code, the purpose of which is to strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework of forestry policy, impose penal sanctions for poaching, enforce the oil code in order to protect the environment, adopt a programme for the collection of urban waste by youth associations, and combat environmental pollution. Assistance in support of this policy is being provided by UNDP and the World Bank (Global Environmental Facility-Congo) and by the European Union.

E. Governance and decentralization

10. In March 1992 the Congo adopted by referendum a new constitution which introduced a multi-party system and provided for the separation of powers: executive, legislative and judicial. Other institutions were envisaged (Economic and Social Council, Information and Communication Board, Supreme Court, Supreme Council of Justice and Constitutional Council), the last two of which have still to be established. The new democratic regime, which

encountered difficulties at the outset (Government censure and dissolution of the National Assembly in October 1992, socio-political disturbances exacerbated by ethnic rivalry in 1993 and 1994), managed to restore social stability. This outcome was achieved by dint of the efforts of the political class to institute a dialogue and ensure the conclusion of agreements between the principal leaders, in particular in the context of the peace culture forum organized in December 1994 with the active participation of UNESCO. The efforts in question led to the signature of a peace covenant in December 1995. The consensus Government inaugurated on 2 September 1996 with more than 43 ministers is part of the outcome.

11. The Government has set in motion throughout the Congo a decentralization of the powers which thus far have been wielded by the State. Such decentralization is an essential tool for bringing the Administration and the administered into closer harmony and involving the citizenry, through elected local assemblies (at the level of regions, communes and districts), in the management of public affairs and of human and financial resources. Councils have been elected in all the local communities. However, the process is still in its infancy and is therefore fragile. It is imperative that donors and cooperation agencies provide assistance in support of decentralization, for this process is the guarantee of the rule of law and the pursuit of democracy in the Congo.

II. RESULTS AND LESSONS OF PAST COOPERATION

12. The mid-term review of the third programme for the Congo (1987-1991), which was conducted in April 1990, revealed that programme execution, although in keeping with the priorities laid down by the Government, took place in a context of widespread crisis both at the institutional level and in economic and social terms, thereby jeopardizing the financial commitments which the State had assumed and holding up the results. This is the reason for the successive extensions of the third programme during 1992 and 1993. From 1993 to 1996, UNDP assistance was provided on an ad hoc annual basis.

13. For 1992-1996, the Congo had an indicative planning figure (IPF) of $6,050,000. Although not part of a coherent cooperation framework, UNDP assistance over the past five years, provided in response to the Government's concerns and totalling 20 projects, concentrated on the following cooperation sectors: capacity-building for economic management; social development and human resources development; redynamization of the productive sector through the promotion of the private sector and of small- and medium-scale enterprises and industries; rural development; and environmental protection.

14. In addition, UNDP assisted other sectors, such as non-governmental organizations and grass-roots community groups, which it supported by financing income-generating and job-creating micro-enterprises, and it provided relief to disaster victims and displaced persons and coordinated donors' support to the 1992 presidential elections and 1993 early parliamentary elections. Lastly, it should be pointed out that in the matter of fund-raising UNDP actively supported the Government's organization in Geneva of a round table of Congo's development partners, which pledged an amount of $622 million in support of the Government's 1997-1999 programme. This process is scheduled to continue with the organization of sectoral consultations in the Congo in the course of 1997.

15. There was no mid-term or final review of UNDP support and therefore no means of evaluating in qualitative and quantitative terms the assistance provided by UNDP over the past five years. However, the periodic meetings held at regular intervals between the Government (Ministry of Planning) and UNDP, on the one hand, and between bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, on the other, have provided a series of opportunities for taking stock of programme delivery. Generally speaking, all the objectives were met to the extent that resources were available.

16. Accordingly, in the area of capacity-building, the national technical cooperation assessment and programmes (NATCAP) exercise was instrumental in establishing an external cooperation data base and providing a reliable information tool for programming external assistance. Thanks to a housing support project, a national housing strategy was adopted. The capacity of the national programme to combat acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) was strengthened in one of the regions of the Congo. The entire education sector was evaluated.

17. The delays in achieving objectives, including postponements and standstills in the provision of assistance, were due to a number of constraints: an unfavourable macroeconomic and socio-political environment, weakness of the national counterpart (contributions, mobilization of counterpart personnel), late mobilization of international skills, civil war. In spite of these difficulties, it should be emphasized that the programme launched in response to requests from the Government can provide a number of lessons.

18. The lessons learned from the cooperation between UNDP and the Congo between 1992 and 1996 have both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, mention must be made of the trust which the Government placed in UNDP as regards strengthening the dialogue with the international community. In spite of the persistence of the economic and financial crisis, the authorities reversed the 1988 decision not to participate any longer in cost-sharing for projects and programmes by disbursing approximately $480,000 in 1994 and 1995. The Government asked UNDP to help it to organize the 1992 presidential elections and the early parliamentary elections in 1993. In this context, cooperation with the bilateral and multilateral donors and with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system was strengthened, and increased coordination of the various forms of assistance was initiated. UNDP has a duty to consolidate these gains so as to ensure that the Congo accords greater importance to dialogue and consensus both internally and externally. Stability, peace and the consolidation of the democratic process are prerequisites for development, especially in the subregion to which the Congo belongs.

19. On the negative side, the shortcomings derive for the most part from: the absence of coherent programming over a period of five years, which, if present, would have ensured greater efficiency in project delivery; weakness of capacity at the level of the office (economic analysis, administrative and financial management); and inadequate means of communication and information tools. Planning on a case-by-case basis year after year has resulted in the proliferation of small projects of questionable impact and sustainability and hence the fragmentation of the very modest resources. Two lessons emerge: the project approach should be abandoned in favour of the programme approach; and the modest level of programmable resources together with the increasing cost of

international skills point to the advisability of using the national execution modality, which should be selected and harnessed little by little in order to build national capacity and develop the internal process of drawing up and implementing UNDP-financed projects.

III. PROPOSED STRATEGY AND THEMATIC AREAS

A. Proposed strategy

20. Because of the sustainable human development challenges which the Congo must face and in the light of the lessons learned from its past cooperation, UNDP assistance to the Congo between 1997 and 2001 will be based essentially on the strategic guidelines which emerged from the round table of the Congo's development partners in November 1996. This medium-term development strategy takes into account the structural adjustment programme resulting from the aforementioned round table and currently being executed with the Bretton Woods institutions and emphasizes an anti-poverty strategy and national capacity-building. The assistance must be appropriate to the extremely sensitive subregional geopolitical context.

21. Within the framework of this strategy, priority will be given to support for: initiatives aimed at establishing or consolidating peace in the subregion; the development of actions whose objective is to maintain the national consensus, participation, dialogue and the democratic process in general; the redefinition of the role and responsibilities of the State; and gender equality and equality of opportunity. To this end, the methodological approach will incorporate the following: pursuit of more highly concerted action with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and with the community of donors in order to ensure genuine complementarity and better use of financial resources for development. Emphasis will be placed on dialogue and partnership with civil society and non-governmental organizations, inter alia through recourse to such project execution modalities as the contract for the delivery of services.

B. Proposed thematic areas

22. With a view to reflecting the concerns expressed at the round table and making the most of the modest resources available ($4.5 million), on the one hand, and completing actions initiated in the preceding cycle, on the other, UNDP will fit the bulk of its activities into the framework of two major national programmes, namely a programme to combat poverty in support of the emergency social action programme and a programme to build management capacity in support of the programme to strengthen management of the economy. Both the programmes will reflect the other themes arising out of the UNDP mandate - the advancement of women, management of the environment, the dynamization of the private sector, the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, governance and the consolidation of peace - so that all Congolese citizens will be able to define the kind of country they would like to inhabit in the year 2025.

1. Programme I: poverty reduction

23. Poverty is the principal concern of the Government, which has provided for an appropriation of $12 million for the implementation of the emergency social action programme. Like the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the African Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), whose activities in the Congo, both current and in preparation, emphasize anti-poverty measures, this programme will provide support for action to end the isolation of rural areas, improve health in poor urban areas, increase gender equity, improve living conditions for people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the disabled and abandoned children, and revitalize the economic activity of the Congo through small- and medium-scale enterprises and industries and non-governmental organizations and grass-roots community groups. The programme will also include the collection of data on poverty in the Congo, with a view to strengthening the tools for monitoring and evaluating the programme's impact on the living conditions of the beneficiaries.

2. Programme II: building management capacity

24. The Government intends to create the necessary management capacity for an efficient functioning of the primary development agencies. The goal is a rational and sustainable improvement of management capacity not only through the mobilization of technical contributions (upgrading of skills in specific departments, development of management tools, improvement of the work environment), but also by changing the protagonists' attitudes to work performed on behalf of the State, their duties and obligations as public service officials and the criteria for managing public resources. Beyond the implementation of these activities, the intention is to promote or consolidate reconciliation between the administered and their Administration and therefore to employ means which ensure not only participation, transparency and responsibility but also respect for the State, with each individual deferring to the rule of law and taking charge of his or her own future.

25. An essential complement to the sustainability of the anti-poverty actions, the programme to build management capacity will also have several components: activities linked to the priority action plan which will focus on four essential functions (management of public finances, sectoral and intersectoral strategic management, piloting the economy and horizontal administration of departments); rehabilitative actions (judicial machinery, civil service); governance (decentralization, training, support for presidential and parliamentary elections in 1997 and 1998); actions to assist aid coordination, cooperation management and planning (national long-term perspective studies and programmes, collection of data which are essential to an understanding of the situation to be improved, before the formulation of programmes/projects and a report on development cooperation).

IV. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

A. Execution modalities

26. For the most part, the execution of UNDP-supported projects has consistently received the assistance of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. While recourse will continue to be made to the services of the specialized agencies, greater emphasis will be put on the use of national execution modalities, especially in relation to contracts for the delivery of services, which permit the capacity of non-governmental organizations, national research departments and national training institutes to be utilized for project management. As this approach is new in the Congo, particular attention will be paid to bookkeeping and the need to follow United Nations procedures in that area. The choice of execution modalities will also reflect the importance of efficiency and speed in the implementation of projects, especially in the case of those that bring almost immediate relief to the beneficiaries, thereby contributing to social stability.

27. The two programmes to be launched partake of the programme approach to the extent that they incorporate cross-cutting issues. Consultation, dialogue and concerted planning with the cooperation agencies and other donors will be maintained and reinforced. A seminar on poverty, in which the participants will include the Government, civil society, the media and the United Nations system as a whole, especially the Joint Consultative Group on Policies, will be organized jointly with the World Bank, whose past work in the area of urban poverty will be of benefit. The actions in support of abandoned children will be evaluated, formulated and implemented in close collaboration with UNICEF.

28. Owing to the modest level of the resources allocated to the Congo, recourse will be had increasingly to the services of national experts, the United Nations Volunteers programme and selective subcontracting.

B. Monitoring and evaluation

29. At the level of the programmes, each programme support or project narrative will specify the appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures; reports on project activities and reports evaluating the results achieved will be prepared every year, a final report will be drawn up at the end of the project and technical reports will be written as needed; monitoring visits and tripartite review meetings will be part of the reporting process. As regards the country cooperation framework, the tools continue to be the annual and biannual reports on project activities and reports evaluating the results achieved, with the reporting exercise under the control of the local programme advisory committee. In addition, in the context of the data collection and analysis activities (poverty, sustainable human development, development cooperation report), means of assessing the impact on the beneficiaries of implemented activities will be worked out, including the development of specific indicators.

C. Resource mobilization

30. The round table and sectoral consultation process currently in progress should, subject to a genuine internalization by the national counterpart, permit not only the reinforcement of the national sovereignty exercise, but also the strengthening of aid coordination and coherent and complementary resource mobilization, in keeping with national priorities.

Annex

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION TARGET TABLE FOR THE CONGO (1997-2001)

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Source	Amount	Comments
UNDP CORE FUNDS		
Estimated IPF carry-over	320	
TRAC 1.1.1	4 771	Assigned immediately to country.
TRAC 1.1.2	0 to 66.7 per cent of TRAC 1.1.1	This range of percentages is presented for initial planning purposes only. The actual assignment will depend on the availability of high-quality programmes. Any increase in the range of percentages would also be subject to availability of resources.
SPPD/STS	233	
Subtotal	5 324[a]	
NON-CORE FUNDS		
Government cost-sharing	771	Disbursed in 1985 and 1995 and not yet utilized.
Sustainable development funds	-	
Third-party cost-sharing	-	
Funds, trust funds and other	-	
Subtotal	771	
GRAND TOTAL	6 095[a]	

[a] Not inclusive of TRAC 1.1.2, which is allocated regionally for subsequent country application.

Abbreviations: IPF = indicative planning figure; SPPD = support for policy and programme development; STS = support for technical services; and TRAC = target for resource assignment from the core.